Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/22/0697
Woodcroft , Okehurst Lane, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9HR

SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION:

The proposal seeks permission to erect a barn for the storage of machinery in a field to the west of Stane Street and North of Oakehurst Road. To the north of the site a café and Travelodge are located with L & W contractors located further north. The site would be accessed from Okehurst Lane and hardstanding is proposed to surround the barn. The barn would be erected from steel with a pitched roof.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

BL/17/03	Erection of replacement bungalow Site: The Annexe Woodcroft Okehurst Lane Billingshurst	Application Permitted on 28.07.2003
DC/04/0647	Erection of 3 stables and tackroom	Application Permitted on 16.06.2004
DC/15/1993	Erection of a single storey side extension (Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed)	Application Withdrawn on 06.11.2015
DC/15/2546	Erection of a single storey side extension	Application Permitted on 22.12.2015

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 7 - Economic Growth
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 25 - District Character and Natural Environment
Policy 26 - Countryside Protection
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 35 - Climate change
Policy 38 - Flooding
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 43 - Community facilities, leisure and recreation

The Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040
The Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 was submitted for examination on the 26th of July 2024. Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that *"local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:*

a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);

b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and

c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework [NPPF] (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)"

Policies in this Plan do not carry full statutory weight but are gathering weight as the Plan proceeds through its stages. They provide an indication of the direction of future policy. Since the 26th of July 2024, when the Plan was agreed for submission to the Secretary of State, it has gained weight for the determination of planning applications. The relevant policies are:

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Strategic Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Policy 31 Rural Economic Development

Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan:
Policy Bill 1 – Billingshurst Built Up Area

Parish Design Statement:
Billingshurst Design Statement

Planning Advice Notes:
Facilitating Appropriate Development
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

HDC Arboriculture (15.10.2024): Comment

The application seems to have evolved over time and is now proposing a new access and apron around the barn position.

Originally the application stated there were no trees however as the position and extent of hardstanding has altered it now clearly requires engineering alongside both the edge of the established copse of trees to the West and the hedgerow oak trees to the North.

In order to enable a fair assessment of direct and indirect impacts on these trees of landscape significance, as per standard validation requirement, a tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment is required to enable informed comment in this respect.

HDC Arboriculture (30.08.2024): Comment

The chosen route is outside of any potential tree rooting constraints. Hardstanding associated with the barn should be restricted to South and East elevations (away from field boundaries) to avoid any further potential direct impacts in this respect.

HDC Arboriculture (07.06.2024): Comment

The block plan sites the building foundation approx. 10m from the line of ditch bank oak trees to the West and a greater distance from those in the hedgerow to the North, on and adjacent to the boundary with the motel. These trees collectively make a significant contribution to the landscape character of the area.

At the proximity proposed, direct impacts would be limited to some access facilitation pruning works required as a result of the branch spreads of the nearest trees currently extending to the proposed Western elevation of the barn.

The D & A statement refers to the siting being dependant upon a new access that is proposed along the Northern boundary. Without sight of what is proposed, unable to make a fair assessment of the impacts on key rooting areas of the boundary trees from requisite engineering requirements. If the access is to be considered in the current application, recommend that this and all new hardstandings associated with the build are designed following assessment of the minimum recommended root protection areas of the bounding hedgerow oaks (in accordance with BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations).

If latter assessment shows that there would be new hardstanding/engineering within the minimum recommended areas of exclusion in this respect, recommend that consideration be given to re-siting accordingly to minimise direct landscape impacts from the development.

HDC Environmental Health (14.06.2024): No Objection

Provided the barn is used for storage of agricultural machinery only. No fuels, oils or other chemicals should be stored, and no works of repair, maintenance or servicing should be undertaken.

HDC Landscape Architect (01.10.2024): Comment

As per previous advice, whilst the development is likely to result in some negative effects to the landscape character and visual amenity of the area, the proposals are not an uncommon feature, and the harm might be outweighed if there is a strong need/justification for the proposed barn.

To fully assess what the likely effects on the landscape character and amenity of the area are, further details are required to understand:

1. the impact the proposals will have on key landscape features namely the close proximity of the proposed access and barn to the trees along the western boundary

2. and what mitigation measures are being proposed to better integrate the development and lessen the landscape visual and character effects

Therefore as it stands, there isn't enough information to support the proposal and without clarity on the impacts on the existing trees and mitigation measures in place, the proposals cannot be supported in landscape and visual grounds.

The amended location plan now shows the access to the proposed barn to be through the existing access at Okehurst Lane. This is a positive change in principle as it will retain the existing hedgerow along Stane Street and concerns over the level of adverse visual effect experience from the highway. However, it is noted that the proposed track is adjacent to the woodland belt sited along the western boundary. The exact positioning of the track and hardstanding around the proposed barn needs to be submitted alongside the RPA's for the existing trees to demonstrate that there is no negative impacts

on the trees. The tree belt makes a significant contribution to the character of the area and its loss or deterioration as result of the proposals would adversely impact the character of the area.

In addition, no further information is provided with regards the mitigation planting suggested within the submitted DAS. It is requested that a landscape strategy is submitted prior to determination to provide an indication of the type and location of the proposed planting. Full details of the landscape scheme can be reserved by condition if preferred.

It is recommended that the strategy in addition to the tree planting around the barn, also includes the strengthening of the field boundaries, particularly the southern part of the site along the eastern (Stane Street) and Okehurst Ln to soften views towards the proposed barn and yard activities but also to strengthen this key character feature.

The design and access statement suggests that a fence and tree planting surrounding the barn is proposed, however the extent and location of this is also not shown. Location and details of any fencing to define the curtilage of the building and change of use must be provided.

Also as previously requested, a landscape maintenance and management plan detailing how the hedge along the road and boundaries is maintained (including what height) is also recommended to provide certainty that any mitigation measures proposed are managed and maintained for the longevity of the scheme.

And finally, note the change of development description from agricultural barn to steel barn to store machinery but there appears to be no change to the building specification, so it is assumed these details remain as originally submitted.

HDC Landscape Architect: 15th of September 2022

Unfortunately, the information provided only deals with the issue of location of vehicular access from a highway point of view. No consideration has been made to the landscape effects and any measures to mitigate such negative effects.

The vehicular access dissects the field in half, no thought given to the field pattern, or how visually intrusive the proposals would be. The submitted plans also do not detail the full extent of the access road and how this would link to the barn, nor it demarcates what would be hardstanding area associated with the barn. No details provided of the amount of hedgerow removed and no indication on how this loss would be mitigated.

The DAS makes the following statement but not shown anywhere within the plans to what this means in practice:

"we are then going to plant new trees surrounding the barn to ensure that it lends itself to the location and the surroundings. The barn will sit alongside the new access drive which will run alongside Billy's on the Road and the Travelodge. However, the field is well screened from both businesses and therefore we foresee no issues with regards to where the barn will be sited."

Please note the site might be well screened along part of the boundary with Billy's road/Travelodge, however there are views available along Stane Street and more so if the bell mouth and visibility splay/ access road were to be constructed. A landscape maintenance and management plan detailing how the hedge along the road and boundaries is maintained (including what height) would also be required as part of the mitigation measures proposed.

There isn't enough information to support the proposal and it is my professional judgement that without any mitigation in place the proposals cannot be supported in landscape and visual grounds.

HDC Landscape Architect (27.06.2024): Comment

The site is located to the north of Billingshurst and falls outside the settlement boundary. The proposal is for the erection of a steel barn to store machinery.

The site within G3 Slinfold and Five Oaks wooded Farmlands of the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment. Key characteristics include gently undulating wooded landscape, small hedged

pastures with some larger arable fields, extensive coppice woodland and largely rural character, although busy A29 corridor in the west. Significant loss of character is identified has already occurred along the A20 corridor resulting in a moderate sensitivity. The Planning and Land Management Guidelines for this area highlights the need to conserve the rural undeveloped character, consider the cumulative impact of small scale change inc suburbanisation along roads, ensure new development is well integrated into the existing landscape pattern of woodlands, hedgerows and shaws and management of coppice woodlands where appropriate.

The site's openness and undeveloped nature contribute to the rural character of the area notwithstanding the urbanising influences of the A29 to the east, Woodcroft and Dunelm to the south and Billy's to the north. Five Acres woodland sits to the west. There are available views of the site travelling along the A29 and Okehurst Lane. There are no views available of the site from public rights of way.

Note the concerns raised by Highways with regards a new access point from the A29. Exact location of proposed access is not yet known and therefore it is not possible for me to assess any effects this may have on views along the A29. However, if not mitigated, the removal of existing hedgerow is likely to have a negative visual effect, by opening up views towards the proposals.

The erection of a Barn will add to the urbanising features in the area. Whilst the development is likely to result in some negative effects to the landscape character and visual amenity of the area, the proposals are not an uncommon feature and the harm may be outweighed if there is a strong need/justification for the proposed barn. The design and access statement suggests that a fence and tree planting surrounding the barn is also proposed however the extent and location of this is also not shown.

In summary, whilst in principle the placing of a barn of this size and height could be accommodated within the field, further details are required to understand the mitigation measures proposed and that these are sufficient to better integrate the development and lessen the harm.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

District Newt Licensing (14.10.2024): Comment

It is considered that the proposed development would present a low risk to great crested newts and/or their habitats. However, as the development is within the red Impact Risk Zone, as modelled by district licence mapping, informative recommended.

WSCC Highways (01.10.2024): Comment

From inspection of the amended plans, the applicant now proposes to utilise the existing vehicular access point on Okehurst Lane, with no alterations to this arrangement proposed. There are no apparent visibility concerns with the existing point of access on Okehurst Lane. In addition, the site exhibits suitable space for the parking and turning of vehicles associated with the proposed use.

In summary, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 115), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

WSCC Highways (18.08.2024): Comment

Visibility splays of 215m in each direction are achievable in each direction, at 2.4m 'X' setback distance. Our local highways boundary mapping indicates that part of the splays are within the applicants' land, therefore the achieved splays would need to be secured via planning condition.

Note the presence of vegetation overgrowing into the extent of the public highway which obstructs visibility. The applicant should be aware that they will need to cut back this vegetation in order to achieve suitable visibility. Once cut back the applicant would be advised to maintain / cut back any vegetation which is overgrown into the visibility splay. The Local Planning Authority may wish to consider the impact of any visibility splays upon the street scene.

The proposed bell mouth style access would need to be constructed under a Section 278 minor works agreement licence. Having consulted the Highways Engineer regarding the design of the proposed access, they have queried the difference between the radii; however, these details can be agreed at design stage.

Swept path tracking has been provided within drawing no B22-175-003 Rev A demonstrating that 10m rigid vehicle can egress/ingress into the site in forward gear. The site benefits of large internal area and while parking layout has not been demonstrated, minded to advise that such a provision can be secured via planning condition.

The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 111), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

WSCC Highways (24.05.2024): Comment

The site is located on the corner plot between Okehurst Lane (unclassified road) and Stane Street (A29,A-classified road) both subject to national speed limit.

The design and access document states that the site is currently unused. It is also stated that the site has a vehicular access off Stane Street which will be utilised for the proposal, however this was not demonstrated on the proposed plans. Local street mapping does not indicate any existing access for the site onto A29. The application form states that the existing access is to be relocated and create a bell mouth type access.

It is unclear if the existing access will remain in use, therefore it is advised that any boundary treatment at the existing access are re-established. The applicant is requested to clarify details provided within the design and access statement and the application form. Details of the existing gated access should also be provided. The applicant should demonstrate details of the proposed bell mouth in terms of width, location and geometry. The proposed bell mouth access would need to be constructed under S278 agreement.

Visibility splays for the proposed access have not been demonstrated. The applicant is requested to provide details of the maximum achievable visibility splays at the existing and the proposed access. These splays should be drawn to the guiding principles of Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The 'X' distance should be drawn from the nearside edge of the carriageway into the site and 'Y' distance drawn to the nearside edge of the carriageway in both directions allowing up to 1m into the carriageway to represent the edge of a vehicle track. Visibility splays should be contained wholly within land under applicant's control or that considered highway.

Parish Comments:

Billingshurst Parish Council (02.10.2024): Maintain Objection

Billingshurst Parish Council (10.06.2024): Objection

Members agreed with the concerns raised by both Highways and the Arboricultural Officer. They felt that the height, scale and mass of the proposed barn is excessively large for the location and that it could be better positioned within the available plot. Without effective screening, the proposed barn will be a very visible intrusion on the rural landscape of the location.

The A29 is a very busy road at all times of the day. Members were concerned that another access onto it in this location would raise safety concerns for both pedestrians and motorists.

It was noted that Highways has asked for further information and a re-consult on the proposal and the Parish Council would like to be involved in that re-consult please.

Representations:

None received

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS:

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a legal duty to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality, fostering good relations in respect of Race, Disability, Gender including gender reassignment, Age, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy and maternity, Religion or belief. The Equality Act 2010 will form part of the planning assessment below.

Article 8 (Right to respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application.

Consideration of Human Rights and Equalities forms part of the planning assessment below.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

The Local Planning Authority understood from the originally submitted documents that the barn would be an agricultural barn. The barn would store machinery used to manage the woodland. Since the submission of the application the Local Planning Authority have ascertained from the applicant that the use of the barn would be used to store garden machinery, it is also proposed to bring traffic management equipment from the applicant's business to repair in the barn.

The site is located outside of a defined built-up area boundary and is therefore considered to be located within a countryside location in planning policy terms. HDPF Policy 26 (Countryside Protection) states that development outside of built-up area boundaries must be essential to its countryside location, and must either:

- Support the needs of agriculture or forestry;
- Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;
- Provide for quiet recreational use, or;
- Enable the sustainable development of rural areas

In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including;

- The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change;
- The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; and
- The landform of the area.

Policy 26 and its requirements are further supported by Strategic Policy 14 Countryside Protection in the emerging Local Plan. The policy holds limited weight and states that:

Outside built-up area boundaries and secondary settlements, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to, and justify, its countryside location, and must meet one of the following criteria:

a) Support the needs of agriculture or forestry
b) Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;
c) Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or
d) Enable the sustainable development of rural areas.

In addition, all proposals must be appropriately integrated within the landscape and be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of

activity in the countryside, and protects, conserves, and seeks to enhance, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including;

a) The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change;
b) The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features;
c) The landform of the area; and
d) The protection of dark skies, in particular where it may impact on a designated International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR), Neighbourhood Plan designations and High Weald AONB Management Plan objectives.

As it is understood that the building would be used in part for commercial purposes in association with the Applicant's business, Policy 10 Rural Economic Development of the HDPF is of some relevance. This states that sustainable rural economic development and enterprise within the district will be encouraged in order to generate local employment opportunities and economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities. In the countryside, development which maintains the quality and character of the area, whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity will be supported in principle.

This is further supported by Policy 31 Rural Economic Development from the emerging plan. This policy holds limited weight and states that:

1. Sustainable rural economic development and enterprise within the District as a whole will be supported where it is shown to generate local employment opportunities and economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities.

2. Outside built-up area boundaries or secondary settlements, economic development, which maintains the quality and character of the area whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity, will be supported in principle. Any development should be appropriate to the countryside location, and will be supported provided that:

    a) It does not prejudice, and contributes to, the diverse and sustainable farming enterprises within the District;

    b) It contributes to the sustainable custodianship of the countryside; and

    c) In the case of non-farming countryside-based enterprises and activities, it contributes to the wider rural economy and/or promotes recreation in, and the enjoyment of, the countryside, and complies with the following hierarchy:

        I. As first preference, is contained within suitably located existing buildings which are appropriate for conversion or, in the case of an established rural industrial or commercial site, within the existing boundaries of the site;

        II. Where i) is not feasible, proposals for new buildings or development will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will contribute to sustainable rural economic growth that supports balanced living and working communities.

3. Proposals will be supported provided that they:

    a) Do not adversely affect the character, appearance or visual amenities and the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the location in question; and
    b) Demonstrate a net increase in biodiversity in and around the site.

4. Proposals will be supported provided that car parking requirements can be accommodated satisfactorily within the immediate surroundings of the buildings or an alternative logical solution is proposed.

Policy Bill 1 of the Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan states that development proposals outside the proposed built-up area boundary will only be supported where: it is in accordance with the development plan policies on appropriate uses in the countryside; or ii. it relates to necessary utilities; or iii. it represents the appropriate provision of tourism facilities, accommodation, attractions and activities, where it meets the requirements of Policy BILL11; or iv. it is on sites allocated for those uses in the Horsham District Planning Framework or its successor

The proposal seeks to erect a barn for the purposes of both storage for machinery associated with the maintenance of the land and as workshop space in association with the Applicant's business. No information has been provided to demonstrate how much of the barn would be used for storage purposes, or the degree and intensity of which the barn would be used for commercial purposes. It is not therefore clear what the potential level and intensity of activity within the countryside would be.

Whilst the principle of an agricultural barn is the location may be considered acceptable, providing secure storage space for agricultural equipment and machinery to maintain the land, there are concerns that proposed commercial activities would significantly increase the level and intensity of activity within the countryside location. There is no evidence to demonstrate that the commercial activities are essential within the countryside location, where the proposal would be located outside of any established commercial area.

For these reasons it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would be essential to its countryside location, where the resulting level and intensity of activity would result in harm to the character and tranquillity of the countryside location. While there may be social and economic benefits arising from the development, there are not considered to outweigh the harm as identified.

Landscape, Design and Appearance:

Policy 32 and 33 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality of the emerging local plan holds limited weight. The policy aims to achieve High-quality and inclusive design for all development in the District will be required based on a clear understanding of the local, physical, social, economic, environmental and policy context

The Landscape Architect and the Arboriculturist confirm that there is insufficient information as to whether the trees within the site would be protected and on the mitigation proposed. While this information is lacking, it is clear that while not an uncommon feature, the proposal would have an impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area. It would be large in size and visible from Stane Street. It is however recognised that the barn would be agricultural in appearance and would not be unexpected within a rural location. On balance, it is not therefore considered that the proposed design and siting would result in significant harm to the landscape character and visual amenity of the area.

The track and hardstanding are sited adjacent to tree belt which makes a significant contribution to the character of the area and its loss or deterioration as result of the proposal would adversely impact the character of the area. The proposal as previously stated lacks information to ensure the protection of this tree belt, but if considered acceptable, it is considered that suitable conditions could be imposed to protect the trees during the construction phase.

Amenity Impacts:

Policy 32 of the HDPF states that development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe, and adaptable environment that contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and

spaces themselves. Policy 33 continues that development shall be required to ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land.

Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles of the emerging local plan holds limited weight. The policy seeks to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment and deliver beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. The policy expects development to be designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of existing and future occupiers or users of nearby property and land, for example due to overlooking, over dominance or overshadowing, light pollution, traffic generation, and general activity, noise, odour and/or vibration, and having regard to the sensitivities/impact of surrounding development.

The application lacks information in regard to the times for and type of work required to fix the machinery within the barn and movements through the site. Given residential properties and a hotel are present in close proximity to the site, the noise and activity level could cause an unacceptable impact on neighbouring amenity. It is expected that the noise levels could be restricted by way of condition, as such the impact by way of noise is not considered to warrant refusal.

Subject to conditions, which would be attached were the application supportable, it is considered that the siting and layout of the proposed barn and the resulting relationship with adjoining properties would be sufficient to prevent any unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity.

Highways Impacts:

Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF promote development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users.

The Local Highway Authority have confirmed the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network.

Ecology:

Policy 31 of the HDPF 'Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity' states that 'Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss, and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained' and that development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate.

Circular 06/2005 identifies that the presence of protected species is a material consideration when considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Therefore, it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed application, is established before planning permission is granted. Information on biodiversity impacts and opportunities should inform all stages of development, and an ecological survey is usually necessary where the type and location of development are such that the impact on biodiversity may be significant and existing information is lacking or inadequate.

The proposed barn would be located in an agricultural field in close proximity to woodland, trees belts, and ponds. This has the potential to host suitable habit and transitional space for protected species.

No ecology information has been submitted as part of the current application to demonstrate that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on protected species and its habitat, and to establish how the development will contribute to measurable Biodiversity Net Gain. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Paragraphs 180 and 186 of the NPPF.

Conclusions:

The proposal is not essential to its countryside location and justification for its location and contribution to the rural economy have not been provided. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on protected species and their habitats.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reason for Refusal:

1. The proposed development would be located in the countryside, outside of any defined built-up area boundary, and outside of an established commercial site. It has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the development is essential to its countryside location and that there is an essential and functional need for the barn in this rural location. It has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would not lead to a significant level and intensity of activity in the countryside location, and consequently, the proposal represents inappropriate and unjustified development within the countryside, contrary to Policies 1, 3, 4, and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policy 1 of the Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan.

2 Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on protected species and its habitat, and to establish how the development will contribute to measurable Biodiversity Net Gain, contrary to Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Paragraphs 180 and 186 of the NPPF.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/22/0697
Schedule of plans/documents **not approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Floor plan	Column Layout & Roof Plan	GA01	18.04.2022
Elevation plan	Elevations	GA02	18.04.2022
Block plan	Block/Site Plan	D-2309-1C-JGT-THQ2101	26.04.2022
Location plan	Location Plan	D-2309-2E-JGT-THQ2101	18.09.2024

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Alice Johnson Date: 17/10/2024

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 22.10.2024